Addressing Climate Change: A Top U.S. Priority

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"The global climate challenge is about opportunity, security, even our very survival in the long term."

- Secretary of State John Kerry

Climate change is one of our most urgent, complex, and far-reaching challenges. It also presents opportunities to strengthen U.S. and global security and promote economic growth.

Urgent Action Needed

Climate change poses multiple threats to U.S. and global security. It is likely to exacerbate economic and social inequality, and increase competition and conflict over agricultural, marine, and water resources. It can result in the massive displacement of people, including those whose livelihoods depend on these resources.

The case for climate action is rooted in sound science and economics. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has laid out clear and compelling scientific evidence of climate change and its link to human influence. Glaciers are melting, heat waves are more frequent and longer-lasting, and sea levels are rising more quickly than anticipated. Climate change also presents an opportunity to advance new technologies, grow our economies, and strengthen communities. Working together, we can rise to meet this global challenge and create cleaner, healthier communities.

Presidential Priority

Recognizing the threats and opportunities presented by climate change, President Obama announced a three-part Climate Action Plan in June 2013:

- Cut carbon pollution in the United States: the United States has implemented stringent, long-term standards for vehicle emissions, increased building and appliance efficiency, doubled electricity generation from wind and sun, and is developing standards to cut carbon pollution from power plants;
- Prepare the United States for the impacts of climate change; and
- Lead international efforts to address global climate change.

The Plan builds on President Obama's 2010 Policy Directive on Global Development that elevated the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCI) as a Presidential development initiative. The GCCI integrates climate change considerations into U.S. foreign assistance and advances practical, on-the-ground solutions worldwide – helping developing countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve resiliency to climate change impacts.

Leading Internationally

Building off his decades of leadership on climate change, Secretary Kerry is making global climate change a top foreign policy priority, including focusing the Department's efforts to:

- **Conclude a new international climate change agreement** – working through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to negotiate a new, ambitious international climate agreement applicable to all countries by 2015 to take effect in 2020;
- **Implement the GCCI** – undertaking a pragmatic, whole-of-government approach to speed the transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future, including 1) promoting clean energy solutions around the world; 2) slowing, halting, and reversing emissions from land use; and 3) helping the most vulnerable countries strengthen climate resilience;
- **Enhance other multilateral and bilateral engagement** – helping lead efforts in the Major Economies Forum, Clean Energy Ministerial, Montreal Protocol, and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants, as well as through bilateral efforts with over 50 partner countries;
- **Mobilize financial resources** – working to mobilize and leverage billions of dollars of funding to transform our energy economies and promote sustainable land use, as well as working to reduce fossil fuel subsidies and to limit public funding for high-carbon energy production and infrastructure; and
- **Integrate climate change with other priorities** – better integrating climate solutions into cross-cutting challenges, including women's empowerment, urbanization, conflict and security, and our own management and operations.